Difficulties faced by the people in PDS

4418. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the difficulties faced by the people in Public Distribution System, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether any Committee has been appointed to study the difficulties;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there is any proposal to revamp the PDS; and

(e) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Public Distribution System (PDS) is an operation of vast magnitude under the joint responsibility of the Centre and State Governments involving multiple agencies including about 4.63 lakh Fair Price Shops (FPSs) in the country. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, storage and transportation of the PDS commodities upto the designated depots and making them available to the States. The responsibility of distribution of the essential commodities to the consumers through the Fair Price Shops and administration of the PDS rests with the State Governments and UT Administration.

As multiple agencies including a large network of FPSs are involved in PDS operations, the possibility of malfunctioning in some cases leading to difficulties for consumers at some levels cannot be ruled out. However, State Governments/UT Administrations have been instructed to make the system transparent, foolproof and accountable so that the consumers do not face any difficulty in obtaining the benefit under PDS.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e) Keeping in view the consensus on better targeting and revamping of PDS, Government has recently made the following policy changes under the Public Distribution System (PDS) in the country.

(i) Allocation of foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been doubled from 10 kg. to 20 kg. per family per month at 50% of economic cost and allocation for APL families has been maintained at economic cost *w.e.f.* 1.4.2000.

(ii) Foodgrains under TPDS are being allotted to States/UTs for families below poverty line (BPL) based on population projection of Registrar General as on 1.3.2000 instead of earlier pupulation base of 1995.

(iii) States/UTs have been authorised to lift rice and wheat against APL allocation at APL rates *i.e.* 100% of the economic cost or open market sale rates whichever are lower provided that it will not be less than levy price of rice for the State.

(iv) The Antyodaya Anna Yojana launched on the 25th December, 2000 contemplates identification of one crore poorest of the poor families and providing them with foodgrains @ 25 k.g. per family per month at highly subsidised rates—Rs. 2 a kg. for wheat and Rs. 3 a kg. for rice.

(v) With a view to restructuring of PDS for levy sugar, the Government has decided that w.e.f. 1st February, 2001, levy sugar supply under PDS will be restricted to BPL families only, except in case of North Eastern States, Hilly States and Island Territories where the existing arrangements will continue. The Government have also decided that the population to be covered for supply of sugar under PDS would be on the basis of projected population as on 1st March, 2000. The per capita norm has been enhanced from 425 gms. to 500 grams per month so that the BPL benficiaries would get benefited further.